

VZCZCXYZ0000  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIL #1803/01 2161130  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 041130Z AUG 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4171  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 9890  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 5578  
RUEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CCPA// IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1040  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 7656  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1653  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 001803

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)  
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: AUGUST 04, 2009

Summary: Reports on local political developments dominated headlines in all major newspapers on Tuesday. All dailies continued to give front page coverage to reports and photographs on follow up to Saturday's communal violence in the Punjab's town of Gojra. All newspapers reported that the National Assembly adopted a unanimous resolution, "condemning" the tragic incident and demanding "exemplary punishment" to the culprits. Reports on the killing of five militants in Upper Dir "as the jets bombed Taliban hideouts" received front-page display. In a Washington datelined story, the English daily, "Dawn," reported that the "Obama's exit policy envisaged Taliban joining the political mainstream." Some major newspapers highlighted an LA Times report that Admiral Mike Mullen established a Pak-Afghan Coordination Cell "to bring together the Pentagon's top strategy and intelligence experts."

Most major newspapers continued to pen editorials and columns on the Gojra riots, the Supreme Court's verdict, and the sedition case against the TNSM leader Sufi Mohammad. Commenting on the blasphemy laws, the center-left independent national English daily "Dawn," noted that these laws "have become a ticket in the hands of the majority to persecute and victimize the minority communities if they don't easily submit to their inferior status in society." The center-right national English daily "The Nation," observed that "this episode should not have happened, but it did. Something is obviously wrong in the republic, which needs fixing." The leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" underlined that "this is perhaps the most appropriate time for the religious scholars to stand up and extinguish the fire of communal violence and hatred." End Summary.

-----  
News Stories  
-----

"NA Seeks Gojra Inquiry Report" "The News" (08/04)

"The National Assembly on Monday adopted a resolution, condemning in the strongest words the tragic Gojra incident and demanding exemplary punishment to the culprits and compensation for the affected families of the Christian community."

"Government To Protect Rights Of All Citizens: FO" "Dawn" (08/04)

"The government is committed to protecting the fundamental rights of all citizens and to promoting tolerance and harmony among all religions and sections of society. The Foreign Office spokesman in a statement issued on Monday said the government had strongly condemned the Gojra incident in which precious lives were lost and

property was damaged."

"Jets Kill Five Militants In Dir Upper" "The News" (08/04)

"Fighter Jets bombs Taliban hideouts and killed at least five militants in Dir Upper on Monday, officials said."

"Obama's Exit Policy Envisages Taliban Joining Mainstream" "Dawn" (08/04)

"The Obama administration already has an exit strategy for Afghanistan, which includes increasing U.S. military strength in the country to force the Taliban to join the political mainstream, U.S. experts say. But the U.S. policy-makers also realize that showing any sign of weakness will further prolong the war."

"Mullen Creates Pak-Afghan Coordination Cell" "Daily Times" (08/04)

"Far from the prestigious windowed offices on the outerring of the Pentagon, a new war room focusing entirely on the conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan sits deep inside a cavernous basement, the LA Times reported on Monday. Created by Navy Admiral Michael G Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Pakistan Afghanistan Coordination Cell is intended to bring together the Pentagon's top strategy and intelligence experts."

"Arrival of U.S. Marines Is Threat For Pakistan's Security: JI Leader Asadullah Bhutto," "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (08/04)

"Chief of Jamaat-e-Islami Sindh, Maulana Asadullah Bhutto, has said that the coming of the U.S. Marines to Pakistan is a threat for the national security. Activities of the American embassy in Pakistan are worrisome, and the government must understand the foreign conspiracies."

"Jirga Resents Action Against Mehsuds" "The Nation" (08/04)

"Leading Mehsud tribal elders on Monday resented action against their entire tribe and observed that they would knock every door to stop the ongoing bloodshed of Mehsuds in the native South Waziristan Agency as well as other parts of the country."

"Swat Provides Model To Contain Extremism: Zardari" (08/04)

"President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday said the recent social, political and security upheaval in Swat and Malakand while posing serious challenges also afforded new opportunities to create viable models for containing extremism and violence as they rear their ugly heads in other parts of the region and the world."

"Plan For Malakand Prepared For Friends' Meeting" "Dawn" (08/04)

"Pakistan will place a pilot project to the second ministerial meeting of the Friends of Democratic Pakistan to be held in Istanbul on August 25 to seek assistance for reconstruction and rehabilitation of displaced people in the Malakand division."

"Army Majors Arrested For Collaborating With Terrorists" "Daily Times" (08/04)

"Elements in the intelligence agencies who were sympathetic towards terrorists, including Baitullah Mehsud, Qari Ilyas and Qari Hussain and with banned organizations had resigned and had been arrested, a private TV channel quoted Interior Minister Rehman Malik on Monday, adding they were officers of the rank of Major and wanted to target army generals."

"Karzai Promised To Strike Terrorist Camps: Malik" "Dawn" (08/04)

"Interior Minister Rehman Malik has reiterated his claim that terrorist training camps in Afghanistan were operating against Pakistan and that Afghan President Hamid Karzai had promised to take action against them. Mr. Malik said in a statement on Monday."

"Three Militants Die In Bajaur" "The News" (08/04)

"Three militants were killed and several others injured when

security forces pounded suspected hideouts of the militants in different areas of Salarzai Tehsil of Bajaur Agency, official sources said on Monday. They added that a number of sanctuaries of the militants were destroyed in the action."

"Six Killed In Fresh Tirah Clashes" "Dawn" (08/04)

"At least six people were killed and five others injured in fresh clashes between militants of the banned Lashkar-i-Islam and Ansaar-ul-Islam groups in the remote Tirah valley of the Khyber Agency on Monday."

"Another Seminary Razed In Lakki Marwat" "Dawn" (08/04)

"Security forces demolished another religious seminary, Jamia Miftahul Uloom in Bachkan Ahmadzai area in Lakki Marwat on Monday, Official sources and eyewitnesses said."

"Kabal Soon To Be Cleared Off Militants: LT. Gen. Nadeem" "The News" (08/04)

"LT. Gen. Nadeem Ahmad, in-charge of Special Support Group, said on Monday that Kabal tehsil would be cleared of militants within a few days, allowing the displaced people to return to their homes."

"Pakistan Wants Bilateral Trade Agreement With U.S." "The News" (08/04)

"In a new development, Pakistan has decided to reinitiate the stalled process of technical dialogue with the U.S. authorities to finalize the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) by December this year, confirmed Federal Minister for Investment Senator Waqar Ahmad Khan while talking to 'The News' in Islamabad on Monday."

-----  
Editorials/Op-eds  
-----

"Rampant Bigotry," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (08/04)

"Yet it seems little is changing to avoid the repetition of such incidents. In fact, while Gojra burnt the local administration made only half-hearted efforts to douse the fires.... Unfortunately, the fact that we have blasphemy laws suggests that we are not. These laws have become a ticket in the hands of the majority to persecute and victimize the minority communities if they don't easily submit to their inferior status in society.... A state held hostage by its own bigots cannot guarantee protection for religious minorities in its jurisdiction."

"Gojra Riots," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/04)

"Though the laying of blasphemy charges came as a shock to the local Christian community, there is no justification for the protests to turn violent. Matters must be settled in a peaceful manner, preferably in court.... This episode should not have happened, but it did. Something is obviously wrong in the republic, which needs fixing."

"When Society Will Be Established Envisioned By Founder Of Pakistan?" an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (08/04)

"Incidents like Gojra tragedy can infuriate the public across the country, and anti-state elements could take advantage of this charged situation. Moreover, the non-Muslim forces at global and regional levels, particularly the western media can launch propaganda drive against Pakistan, Islam and the Muslim countries in the garb of criticism on these awful incidents. In fact they (the western media) are already engaged in baseless and preposterous propaganda against Pakistan by labeling it as a terrorist state, or at least a safe haven of terrorists. This is perhaps the most appropriate time for the religious scholars to stand up and extinguish the fire of communal violence and hatred."

"Outlawed Terrorists In Gojra," an editorial in the Lahore-based

liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (08/04)

"Sources in Gojra have revealed that the killers came from outside the city, from Jhang, the hometown of Sipah-e-Sahaba.... There is no 'external hand' here, as announced by an official in Lahore.... Christians have been killed according to plans made by Al Qaeda and its followers."

"Terrorism Case Against Sufi Muhammad," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (08/04)

"Sufi Muhammad played his role for peace in Swat at a time when there was chaos and lawlessness everywhere.... Making cases against Sufi Muhammad will infuriate his supporters.... The government should see reason and release him honorably after withdrawing all the cases. Sufi's cooperation should be sought for establishing peace in the region."

"Treason Case On Sufi Muhammad," an editorial in Lahore-based populist Urdu daily "Waqt" (cir. 10,000) (08/04)

"It is expected of the government that it will widen the scope of its attention for establishing its writ. Apart from Sufi Muhammad all those elements should be taken care of who are bent upon creating anarchy by supporting the extremists."

"Traitor Or Hero?," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/04)

"The issue of justice raised by Sufi made some impact. Now that he is back behind bars, these matters need to be sensibly considered. If this does not happen the risk of another uprising in the future will continue to hover. What people yearn for is some mechanism that grants them access to justice.... In the aftermath of the events in Swat we need to put in place mechanisms that can help solve the basic issues of people."

"Not The End Of The Road," an op-ed by Rahimullah Yusufzai in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (08/04)

"A number of positive things have happened in Swat and the rest of Malakand division in recent days and weeks. Educational institutions have opened in some, if not all, conflict-hit places, and these include girls' schools which were a favorite target of the rampaging Taliban. Repatriation of displaced people is in full swing to areas. Certain basic services have been restored to Mingora and Saidu Sharif and some other towns and villages. The police are again visible on the streets and the civil administration is being slowly revived.... However, a lot needs to be done to make the situation normal.... The way must be opened for those militants to surrender who are reconcilable. The irreconcilable won't surrender and will continue to fight. But a way must be found to reconcile those willing to repent their past and ready to change course."

"Declaration Of Independence Day: Conspiracies In Balochistan," an editorial in Karachi based Pro-Jehadi right-wing daily "Ummat" (Cir. 33,000) (08/04)

"There are some reports that the former head of Kalat state (a principality of Balochistan during British colonial period) Mir Suleman Daud Khan is going to declare an 'independent Balochistan' on August 11, and Baloch nationalists will observe that day as their independence day. Furthermore militants are also planning to wage violent attacks on August 14, the Pakistan's Independence Day. Pakistan must realize the gravity of the situation that our enemies are engaged in disintegrating our country. To foil these attempt the government must address the grievances of the Baloch people, as it is always easy for an enemy to exploit poverty and deprivation of common people to achieve his or her nefarious designs."

"British Foreign Relations Committee Report; American Failures And Duty Of Government Of Pakistan," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (08/04)

"British Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee has reported that

if a repeat of 9/11 occurred then it would be from those Pakistani areas where Al Qaeda and Taliban have sanctuaries and where Pakistan has minimal authority.... The government of Pakistan should see the ways of American and British administrations and should shun pro-America policies to revive the authority of the elected civilian government.... America should be told that peace and stability could return to the region only after it withdraws troops from Afghanistan."

"Is Pakistan A Threat To Afghanistan?," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (08/04)

"To say that threat is now from inside Pakistan is an allegation that few will take seriously. British soldiers never wanted to fight the war which the U.K. only took on because of its status of a close ally of the U.S.... The fact is that the war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda is going far better in Pakistan than in Afghanistan.... Pakistan is doing a better job without the advantage that the NATO forces have with American drones. At this stage, the U.K. Parliament should realize that its best bet is strengthening Pakistan in its war against the terrorists."

"The Great Game," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (08/04)

"A report released by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons, while focusing on the causes of Britain's less than satisfactory performance in the fight against militancy in Afghanistan.... Pakistan is indeed crucial to a successful campaign in Afghanistan, as the report points out. Pakistan cannot be blamed for not doing enough to defeat the forces of militancy and extremism; it has stretched its resources to the maximum. However, important NATO countries have to overcome their reluctance to commit themselves fully to achieve the required results. Instead, the report aptly says, the drone attacks by the U.S. are muddying the waters and by no means helping to win the hearts and minds of the tribesmen. Besides, nothing tangible is in sight about the promised economic and social development of the troubled areas. The longer it takes to deliver on the ground, the worse will be the situation on the War on Terror. Washington is also paying little heed to Islamabad's complaint that outside forces, New Delhi and Kabul, are interfering in Balochistan and FATA, aiding and abetting the insurgents. Unless the U.S. corrects its own perspective, the countries that have joined up in this cause would continue to suffer along with it."

"U.S. Must Admit Its Moral Defeat," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (08/04)

"The U.S. leaning towards India vis-à-vis Pakistan, and its signals to revisit its old policies on Iran and North Korea demonstrate that the U.S. is facing unusual problems due to fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. Following massive economic meltdown, these conflicts have turned into a debacle for the super power. Now, they (the Americans) also want to get rid of the Bush administration policies, and the statements of senior U.S. civilian and military officials show their waning resolve about these wars. It is better for the U.S. administration to admit its moral defeat, and protect its troops by withdrawing them from Afghanistan and Iraq without delay."

"Need For New Initiative On Afghanistan," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (08/04)

"House of Commons Foreign Relations Committee has concluded that international military presence in Afghanistan failed to achieve its targets in the country.... The situation in Afghanistan requires a swift military operation to completely defeat Al Qaeda and extremists, which should be followed by withdrawal of America and its allies from the country.... In our view the major cause of American and international economic crisis was the U.S. and allies adventurism in Iraq and Afghanistan."

"Afghanistan: NATO Complains Of Allies," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (08/04)

"The report has come out with some of the realistic findings like the one that considerable cultural insensitivity of some coalition troops had caused serious damage to Afghans' perceptions that will be difficult to undo. The international forces went to Afghanistan to liberate the country from, what was labeled as, autocratic rule of Taliban but with the passage of time they have expanded their activities. They have also trampled centuries old Afghan traditions besides bombing and killing of innocent. In fact, it is U.S. and U.K. troops that are in the forefront of all such efforts and have, therefore, become symbol of hatred.... We, therefore, believe that the Committee should have recommended to the Government to immediately halt its operations in Afghanistan and withdraw troops engaged in genocide of Afghan people."

"United States' \$1 Billion Islamabad Home Is Its Castle," an op-ed by Syed Saleem Shahzad in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (08/04)

"The ambitious U.S. \$1 billion plan of the U.S. to expand its presence in Islamabad underscores Washington's resolve to consolidate its presence in the region, particularly in pursuit of the endgame in the 'war on terror.' This marks the beginning of direct American handling of 'war and peace' diplomacy in the region, following the forging of a seamless relationship between the Pakistani military establishment and the U.S. military.... As much as the U.S. wants to expand its war efforts, inter-connected Jihadi and militants groups are already thinking beyond their traditional boundaries to meet the challenge."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)  
Feierstein